THE SACRAMENTAL FEAST

C. ARMAND MILLER

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Bremble

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The Sacramental Feast

A COMMUNION BOOK

to aid the devout Communicant
Worthily to Eat and to Drink
at the Lord's Table

By

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To the
Sacred Memory
of
Susan Havemeyer Geissenhainer.

PREFACE.

Many souls have desired help, beyond what is provided by the Service of the Church, in preparing for a blessed participation in the Sacred Feast. For the days preceding the approach to the Altar, as well as for the reception of the Sacrament, they have felt the need of meditation and prayer and the cultivation of a state of mind and heart suitable to the high privilege they were anticipating. For this purpose, in the Church of the Fatherland books called "Communion Books" have had a wide use through centuries. To aid in the same purpose this little book has been written for our people in this land. If you wish thus, with no hasty approach, to draw near to the Table of the Lord, you may begin the week before your communion by reading a portion of the Passion History, found in all our Books of Worship. As the days pass, and especially in the latter days of the week, read also from your Bible the Penitential Psalms, of which Loehe has said that they are a mirror in which you can see how small and weak your penitence is, as compared with the intensity of the Psalmist's con-

trition. They are Psalms vi, xxxii, xxxviii, li, cii, cxxx, cxliii.

Portions of this book may also be used from day to day, with meditation and prayers. Before attending Preparatory Service, or after that service, you may read, in absolute solitude, as personally addressed to you, the questions to aid your self-examination which are found below.

The book is also intended to be taken to the Church, that the prayers for use at the reception of the Sacrament, and while others are receiving, may be at hand.

May the Lord use this offering, for His glory.

Ash Wednesday, 1911.

Sursum Corda.

"Lift up your hearts." In the ancient and venerable order of the Church for the use of the Sacrament of the Altar, these are the first words, after the Salutation of Pastor and people, invoking the presence of the Lord with each other. Oldest among all the liturgical forms of worship is the Service of the Holy Communion, and in the use of the words, "Lift up your hearts," and the devout response, "We lift them up unto the Lord," we are speaking the same sentences which our Fathers in the Faith, under the same circumstances, used even in the days that immediately followed, perhaps in the very days that marked the Apostolic age.

It is the message of the Lord to those about to enter the Holy of Holies of the Christian worship. It is a message of encouragement to the timid, hesitating soul, to the heart bowed down beneath the weight of sorrow, the burden of worldly cares, the incubus of sin. The penitent publican dared not lift up so much as his eyes to Heaven. It were no wonder if we, conscious of all our unworthiness,

could not believe that we are meant when the invitation to the feast goes out; if we, like Peter, who had denied his Lord, needed that special word, "Tell my disciples, and Peter." But the feast is for the very purpose of uplifting. It is only as we lift up our eyes unto the hills whence cometh our help, that we can see that the help is there and is sure to come. It is only as we lift up our hearts unto the Lord, that we can grasp the wonderful truth that He is gracious, that He receiveth sinners and eateth with them, that He bids the outcast come, and those who have no worthiness to plead. "Lift up your hearts," to the sunshine of His favor, to the confidence of His pardon, to the acceptance of His gifts. Only the uplifted heart can realize that

"The love of God is wider than the measures
of man's mind
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind."

Our hearts are lowered to the thoughts and aims and ideas of the world; to the standards of our loving and of our giving, of our goodness and of our greatness. How high they must be lifted, until the Lord's thoughts and the Lord's ways, which

are not like ours, come into the scope even of our imaginings!

This is, too, an injunction to rejoice. The heart lifted up to the plane of the spiritual, perceives the true causes of joy. The low conceptions of this world and its worldliness, count joys in terms of gain, and measure them by things of sense. But the heart that takes Christ's high ideals as its own; that rises to the realms of the eternal verities; that dwells, even now, in the heavenlies with Him, counts it truly meet and right to "give thanks unto the Lord our God" as it draws near to the reception of His peculiar presence. The uplifted heart is needed if in very deed we are to join the chorus of Angels and Archangels and all the company of heaven, and, with them, laud and magnify His glorious Name, evermore praising Him with the seraphim whom Isaiah saw about the throne singing,

> Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;
> Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory;
> Hosanna in the highest.
> Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of
> the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

All that is low and base and selfish is unfitting while we hear the words of the Institution of the Feast; while we crave the mercy of the Lamb of God, and seek His peace, while we kneel and pray and adore, at His gracious Coming, through the earthly elements, to enter in and to abide with us! On this Mount of Transfiguration let there be no miasma of the lowlands, no air of the swamps and morasses! At this portal of high Heaven, in this very presence of the King, let there be no spirit of the market-place, no moving of the heart toward that which is less than the highest.

Here, if anywhere on earth, we not only should, but can, breathe the pure air of the free heights, in the spaces where man walks with God. Sursum Corda!

PRAYER.

O God, who dost regard me in my low estate, and who dost exalt them of low degree; grant that my soul may magnify the Lord, and that my spirit may rejoice in God my Saviour. Enable me to set my mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth; give me to rise, with Christ, into the blessed fellowship of the divine, abiding in the Lord through the eating of His Flesh and the drinking of His Blood. Amen.

The Feast.

The King invites us to His Table, spread with refreshment far more rich and delightful than the nectar and ambrosia of the fabled gods ever could have been, were even the fable true. Simple indeed, is the outward seeming of the Feast. Bread and wine, the ordinary, daily food and drink of the people and the time when the Feast was instituted, are all that the eye beholds. But when the Founder of the Feast, our Blessed Lord, sat with the disciples, on that last evening, in the upper room, He spake of nourishment, mysterious, heavenly, which their eyes could not see nor their senses perceive. St. Peter was there and never forgot the words that were spoken, as St. Mark has recorded them for us. St. Matthew was there and he also wrote for later generations the wonderful message. St. Luke was told, by some eye-witness, of the strange scene and the stranger speech. St. Paul, a generation later, brings, as that which he had "received of the Lord" no different story. To each the very words, "Take, eat; this is my body," had come as the

centre of the Lord's mysterious dealing with them, as the message that could never be forgotten by them, and dare never be forgotten by Christ's Church. "The bread which we break is the participation in the body of Christ. The cup which we bless is the participation in the blood of Christ." (I Cor. x:16). The concord of all the witnesses is absolute. The message which they bring, one by one, is the same. The early Church understood the meaning and the content of the Sacrament in the sense of the very words. A large part of the Church of to-day has lost or perverted the significance of the Feast, finding in it only what the eye perceives and the tongue tastes; conceiving it as sacrifice instead of Sacrament, as that in which we bring to the Lord our faith, our devotion, our love, instead of that in which He brings to us His gifts of grace. Here is the stronger reason for deep thankfulness that the Church of the Augsburg Confession still, as always, receives and holds the message of her Lord and Head with unwavering faith and loyalty.

The Sacrament of the Altar is "the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the

bread and wine, given unto us Christians to eat and to drink, as it was instituted by Christ Himself."

THIS IS THE FEAST OF COMMUNION.—Through the whole revelation of God runs the thought of communion. The Father, Son and Holy Spirit, united in the Oneness of the Being of God,—this is the highest and most mysterious example of communion. The union of the divine and the human in the inspired Word of God, the Scriptures of the Two Testaments, is another instance. In the Person of Christ,—true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary,—the communion of the divine and the human natures is found. Through all His work and words, His living and dying, the divine, inseparably united with the human, acts and operates. Through this pervasion, this inter-abiding of the divine and the human in the Person of the God-Man, His deeds of power, His words of grace and light, His atoning death, His glorious resurrection, have their efficacy. It was in this communion that he chose to approach man, the divine united with the human and earthly, in order through the visible and sensible to find contact with us, creatures of

the flesh. It is God's way. In the Sacrament is not an exceptional, but a regular mode of divine access to man,—the heavenly, mysterious and spiritual brought to us through and by means of the earthly and visible elements. The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the Blood of Christ. The bread which we break is the communion of the Body of Christ (I Cor. 10:16). In the reception of the Sacrament we come into communion with our Blessed Lord, in His entire and perfect Person, human and divine. There is communion with Him, and in Him with the Holy Trinity. This is the highest and most real communion that we can have with God in this life of veiled realities. No wonder the Church in its Order of Worship has put into our mouths after this celestial fellowship the song of aged Simeon, when he had held the infant Christ in his arms: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." Earth has nothing better for us. Heaven alone can excel this communion. At the table of the Lord in the upper kingdom, alone, can we hope to sit at a richer feast.

The same word, "communion" in other places in

the New Testament, is translated "fellowship." From the Apostolic days, the Christians, coming to the sacramental feast, brought with them the gifts for the poor, as well as the provision for the simple meal of which they partook together, before the Lord's Supper. This loving offering of brotherly love was also called the fellowship. Fellowship, with them, meant not merely a word, not only a sentiment, but also the practical sharing of their good things. In this sense also, the feast of the Sacrament is to be a communion. We are to share with those in need the spiritual or temporal gifts which we possess. The thank-offering for the poor is never so appropriate as in connection with the Sacrament of the Altar. For here, above all, we manifest also our fellowship, our communion, with one another. "We are all one bread and one body, even as we are all partakers of this one bread and drink of this one cup."

THIS IS THE FEAST OF HIS PRESENCE.—It is good to remember Him; to have our faith quickened by the vivid realization of His atonement; to have our love made more fervent by the reminder of His love that faltered not at death; to

have our holy purposes renewed and strengthened by the vision of His self-devotion to the uttermost. There is but one thing better; to receive from Him, to accept of Him, to participate in Him. Better far than aught we can give to Him is the least of what He gives to us, and, lo, here is the greatest of His gifts. In Confession of Sin, in Confession of Faith, in prayers and hymns and praises and tribute of our possessions we have brought to Him our offerings. But He has answered us already. In the Declaration of Forgiveness, in the Word, Epistle and Gospel, in the preaching of the message of grace, He has come to us, bearing precious gifts. And now, in the climax of the Feast, He comes to us with Bread of Heaven indeed, and gives to us the Wine of His own life-bearing Blood. It is not our faith, our devotion, that is the chief thing in this service, but that which quickens our faith and gives fervor to our devotion, His broken Body and outpoured Blood, the evidence of His faithfulness and His devotion, and the means of our life and salvation. Let us not find in the bread and wine as many do, alas, only a sort of empty tomb, from which, like Mary, we turn lamenting, "They

have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him"; but let us rather, like Thomas, with his reawakened faith, bow and adore the living One Who is here, and as He communicates Himself to us let us cry, "My Lord and my God!" Here we have no need to take up the Shulammite's lament, as she mourns,

"I sought Him, but I found Him not.
I said, I will rise now, and go about the city,
In the streets and in the broad ways,
I will seek Him Whom my soul loveth:
I sought Him, but I found Him not."
(Song of Solomon, iii, 1, 2.)

No need have we for her pleading to the Beloved Himself,

"Tell me, O Thou Whom my soul loveth,
Where Thou feedest Thy flock,
Where Thou makest it to rest at noon."
(Song of S. i, 7.)

We do not seek for a distant Saviour, for here the Beloved comes to His bride and she welcomes Him and greets Him,

"Thy love is better than wine"
(Song of S. i, 2.)

and she rejoices in His tenderness

"He brought me to His house of wine,
And His banner over me was love."
(Song of S. ii, 4,)

THIS IS THE FEAST OF PARDON.—The burdened sinner is invited here. The message goes out into the highways and byways, inviting the poor and halt and blind, the leper and the publican to come in. The wedding garment is prepared for each, for each the cleansing and the fitting, and to each the assurance, in the very Feast itself, of pardon, of friendship, of the love and favor of the King! You have felt the burden of your guilt. You have read the proclamation of the King. Yet the sense of your unworthiness makes you afraid to accept the invitation. The consciousness of deeper depths of sin which your very growth in grace, perhaps, has brought more clearly to view, makes you tremble lest, after all, you may not claim to be included in that gracious amnesty. That word "Whosoever" seems so plainly to mean you, and yet it means so many others that although you would not have any one excluded your heart yearns for some token that is definitely yours alone. In His exceeding grace He has provided just that

token which you crave. At His table you have His words, "Take eat, this is my Body, which was given for you." This is what you need. This is the utmost aid to your weak faith. This means that so surely as you apart from every other, take the bit of bread between your lips, so surely does He impart with it, to you apart from every other, the Sacred Body broken for your redemption. If you had stood by Calvary, and heard Him, from the cross, looking into your eyes, declare, "This I have done for thee," you could have no clearer evidence of the application of His redemption to your individual need than you have when, in the Sacrament, by His minister, He draws near and communicates Himself to you, imparting with the bread, which you eat, with the wine which you drink, His broken Body and His shed Blood for the remission of your sins. Here each soul, set apart, alone, enters the Holy of Holies and receives the benediction of his Lord, in receiving Him. Here is the pinnacle of personal privilege in spiritual things. Here the Lord comes to us one by one.

"These words, 'Given and shed for you, for the remission of sins' are, besides the bodily eating

and drinking, the chief things in the Sacrament, and he who believes these words has that which they declare and set forth, namely the remission of sins." "The words 'for you' require truly believing hearts." Bring therefore the believing heart, and let the words "for you" bring peace.

THIS IS THE FEAST OF STRENGTH.—Hungry, exhausted with life's battles, beaten down in the conflict with all that is in the world, you are ready to faint and to fall. Only Food of heaven can refresh your powers; only Wine of eternal life can restore your vigor. Some divine elixir must quicken your veins, some celestial manna must instil new might, if you are to take up the task, or to renew the battle. The old heroes used to eat the flesh and drink the blood of a lion to grow lion-hearted. Here, for us, the Lion of the tribe of Judah is offered; here the Strong Son of God gives Himself to us. "My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed" are His words. "Take eat, this is My Body," "Take drink, this is the New Covenant in My Blood." No other food or drink has such life-giving potency. Let the weary, the tempted, the cast down, partake with joy.

THIS IS THE FEAST OF JOY.—It brings solemn, humble, reverent, awful joy, but joy supreme. Joy for the love that not only gave, but gives; for the Saviour Who not only died but lives; for the pardon not only announced but imparted; for the assurance not only spoken but sealed; for the grace not only bestowed but renewed, the strength that is sufficient, and that may be received in every time of need; for the redemption not only offered to all, but, with the earthly elements, communicated to me, apart from all.

Lift up your heart! O soul invited to the Feast, offered the living Bread of which if a man eat he shall live forever, of which the Master of the Feast hath said, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed," see to it, that He need not, longingly, seek for thee in the streets of the city and the broad ways; come thou at His call; exalted and aspiring, enter with gladness into His house of wine, and under his banner of love; hinder not with thy reluctance His entering in to thee, or the imparting of His royal gifts. Amazed thou

well mayst be that He bids thee come and feast upon the true Meat and the true Drink, but He does bid thee, and all His grace is offered thee. Come, eat and drink, and in the new strength of the heavenly refreshment, go forth to show His glorious beauty to the world!

PRAYERS.

"What shall I render unto the Lord
For all His benefits towards me?
I will take the cup of salvation
And call upon the name of the Lord,
I will pay my vows unto the Lord,
Yea, in the presence of His people."
Psalm cxvi, 12-14.

"Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof." Matt. viii, 8.
"I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which Thou hast shewed unto Thy servant." Gen. xxxii, 10.

O Lord, Who art wonderfully gracious, Who hast given Thyself for me, and Who in a mysterious Sacrament dost impart Thyself anew, full of grace and truth, for my strengthening, my joy, my comfort and peace, give me a lowly, contrite heart, give me a firm and steadfast faith, give me acceptable access to

Thy banquet-table, clothe me with the wedding-garment, make me, all unworthy in myself, through Thy worthiness, a welcome guest, and grant that I may receive all the blessings that Thou hast for me, in Thine unspeakable condescension and grace. For Thy Name's sake. Amen.

The Invitation.

When a king spreads a banquet and invites his guests they count it a high honor and privilege. They inquire as to all the details of suitable acceptance; how they shall be dressed, how they shall greet the king, how they shall behave themselves at the table; and they are most scrupulous to comply with each minute observance. It is only when the Great King invites them that men ever make excuse. Indeed, according to the customs of kingdoms, no one dare refuse the gracious message that his monarch wishes his presence. No business engagement, no social obligation, no interest or occupation of any sort, whatever, can stand in the way of a royal invitation. For the king is first in his kingdom, and to make him wait upon a subject's convenience, or to make his call second to that of some person among those over whom he rules, would be to dishonor him and his royalty.

If all this is recognized as only seemly in the relations with each other of those who are after all but men, how much more is it the due of the King

of Kings! How evident is the duty to subordinate all other calls, engagements, and even what, in the lack of His invitation, would be duties, to His condescending desire for your presence at His Feast. How manifest the obligation to take thought as to the veriest details of an acceptance of His invitation; attending not only to the chief thing, the garbing of the spirit in robes of humility and the garment of praise, but even to the clothing of the body, in the modest, quiet raiment which is fitting for the approach to this King. How careful we should be to know and to observe that which is prescribed for those to whom He holds out His sceptre, bidding them draw near; how eager to have our hearts, which He sees, filled with humble prayers, devout aspirations, loving confidence, high thoughts, hunger and thirst for righteousness.

How can one dare excuse himself, when the King bids him come to this richest of all royal banquets? Are you ignorant of the privilege that is offered? Would you refuse the invitation of the king of an earthly realm? Do you, in sad reality, care less for the King of Heaven, the Father of spirits, than for the pitiful pomp of these rulers of

a transitory empire, with their pageants of a day? Are you indifferent to His condescending grace, willing to insult Him with excuses of your lands or oxen that you have bought, or of the worldly festivals, as of a marriage feast, which you will not postpone to His behest? Are you unconscious of your need, of the viands which your spirit must feed upon if it is to live and grow, and which are to be had only at His table? Have you so filled yourself with husks that you are without appetite for the meat and wine set on the Father's board? Do you stay away because you fancy there is nothing offered you but the bit of bread and the drop of wine which your eyes see and your tongue tastes? Do you deny the Word of your Lord, and set yourself up to be wiser than He? Oh, if any of these vain thoughts be the explanation of your lamentable neglect of the Holy Supper, it may be well for you seriously to ask whether you are not worse than the prodigal, or, at least, like the prodigal before he came to himself, a lost son who does not know that he is still lost; who thinks that he is in his father's house while, in truth he is yet in a far country; who has learned to love the swine

and the husks, and who chooses them instead of the robe and the ring and the seat at the table of feasting.

But it may be that you have rejected the invitation because you fear to come. Conscious of your guilt, of His holiness; knowing your garment spotted by the flesh, and afraid to be cast into the outer darkness for lack of the wedding garment; remembering that he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, you have trembled at the thought of approaching the Table of the Lord, and, though hungry, you have chosen to starve. Sursum corda! Lift up your hearts, ye who are afraid; lift them up with new courage, new hope and confidence. He that eateth and drinketh unworthily is not the one who feels his sin and laments it and is afraid because of it; but he who thinks not of it, who heedlessly, and as it were gaily, as at some feast of earth, takes the bread and wine, "not discerning the Lord's body." (I Cor. xi, 29.) You fear just because it is the Lord's Body which you discern, and your awe has made you timid. You discern the Body, but you have not fully discerned the meaning, the encouragement,

the assurance which Its gracious presence brings. He who comes unworthily is unworthy just in this very thing, that he comes as to some common meal, without true fear, without the reverent adoration of the King Who is here, without true penitence or faith; sinful but caring not nor turning from his sin, nor seeking in this Bread and Wine of Heaven, the antidote of sin, the medicine and aliment by which to master sin. Sinner you may be, you are, but that is the very reason why you should come, unless you be a sinner in love with sin. He Who is here, Who gives himself in this Feast in all His divine completeness, is the One who came to call sinners, Who sat with them at table, Who told them that only by the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood could they have eternal life.

To His Church the Lord has given the ministering of the Feast. It is He Who invites you as often as the Church dresses her altar in spotless white, and lays upon the Table of the Lord the bread and wine which He used and commanded, and which He, by his Word, makes the means of conveying to you His Body and Blood. Why should you not

come as often as the invitation comes to you? How can you live the life He wants you to live, without making use of every help He provides for you? What does it mean when only once or twice in a year His people find themselves at His Feast? Why do we need it less than the early Christians who, perhaps every day, certainly every Lord's Day, were fed upon this food divine? The invitation is for always, for every time of hunger; the Feast should be accessible whenever one would thus taste and see that the Lord is good. Would that it might be in the Church to-day as Luther in the Preface to the Small Catechism urges, laying down these principles: "that we are to compel no one to believe or receive the Lord's Supper; that we are not to establish any laws on this point, or appoint the time and place; but that we should so preach as to influence the people without any law adopted by us, to urge, and, as it were, to compel us who are pastors, to administer the Lord's Supper to them. Now this object may be attained if we address them in the following manner: It is to be feared that he who does not desire to receive the Lord's Supper at least three or four times during the year, despises

the Sacrament and is no Christian. So, too, he is no Christian, who neither believes nor obeys the Gospel; for Christ did not say: 'Omit or despise this,' but 'This do ye, as oft as ye drink it,' etc. He commands that this should be done, and by no means be neglected and despised. He says: 'This do.' "

It will be profitable for us to read again the paragraph which follows this, as a summing up of our duty to the King who invites us:

"Now he who does not highly value the Sacrament, shows thereby that he has no sin, no flesh, no devil, no world, no death, no danger, no hell; that is to say, he does not believe that such evils exist, although he may be deeply immersed in them, and completely belong to the devil. On the other hand, he needs no grace, no life, no Paradise, no heaven, no Christ, no God, no good thing. For if he believed that he was involved in such evils, and that he was in need of such blessings, he could not refrain from receiving the Sacrament, wherein aid is afforded against such evils, and, again, such blessings are bestowed. It will not be necessary to compel him by the force of any law to approach the

Lord's Table; he will hasten to it of his own accord, will compel himself to come, and indeed urge you to administer the Sacrament to him."

PRAYER.

O Lord, when Thy servants are sent out by Thee to say all things are ready, and to bid me to the feast, grant that I may with joyful heart go to take my place and not be found without the garment of fitness that Thou dost provide for Thy guests. Give me Thy Holy Spirit, that by Thy grace I may not despise Thy Word, either in the preaching of the Gospel, or in the Sacrament of the Presence of my Lord. May I never neglect aught that in Thy wisdom and Thy love Thou hast provided for my progress in the way of holiness. Make me eager to gather the manna Thou dost send from the skies and may it be as honey in my mouth, and bring strength to my soul. I thank and praise Thee for Thy wondrous grace, that Thou dost bid me come, and that Thou dost come to me, and enter in to abide with me. Reveal Thyself to me, in the breaking of bread, and leave me not forever. Amen.

The Preparation.

That it is the Feast of a King to which one is invited, offers sufficient reason for special thought as to our preparation. But the feast of the King Who bids us come in the Holy Sacrament is of such peculiar excellence and quality that here, most of all, must we take thought as to our fitness, and seek the very preparation that we need. If we were simply going to the Altar to receive bread and wine, the necessity for special preparation would not be so evident; and it is true that in those churches where the feast is believed to be merely a feast of remembrance, the Preparatory Service and the importance of attending it have little emphasis. But if we are coming to partake of Christ's Body and Blood, if the very substance of the Feast is the impartation of a sacramental gift of unearthly potency for good or for evil; if we are approaching a Table at which the Giver of the Feast gives Himself to His guests as heavenly Food; if He has solemnly bidden us beware of unworthy participation, and, by His Spirit, has enjoined those who come to

"examine" themselves, and so to "eat of that bread and drink of that cup;" then, it becomes impossible for the thoughtful and devout Christian to disregard these considerations and to rush heedlessly where he is not ready to go. It is the Scriptural doctrine of the Lord's Supper, which our Church holds and teaches, that makes the Preparatory Service evidently essential.

Besides the reasons which have been suggested there is another which may well be considered. It is the reason which our own need supplies. It were sad enough if we, unworthily receiving the Sacrament, were simply to make the grace of God of none effect, to waste the privilege offered us, to destroy the sacredness of the feast for ourselves, and to fail of all profit. But far more than this is involved in the unworthy use. Whether we come with true faith or without it, worthily or unworthily, what we receive at the Altar is the same; it is what the Word of God makes it, what Jesus says it is, though the whole world should disbelieve and deny. He declares this sacrament to be His true Body and His true Blood, that which was broken on the Cross and shed on Calvary for our sins. And

here, as always, the power divine of the Word of God and of that which it conveys, worketh and must work. The Word of God everywhere and always is efficacious. When preached, it is a "savor of life unto life, or of death unto death," to all who hear; when connected with the earthly elements, communicating, with them, the Body and Blood of the Lord, it becomes likewise, a savor of life unto life or of death unto death, unto all who eat and drink. Unbelief cannot destroy the Sacrament, cannot make absent what the Word of Christ makes present, cannot separate from the bread and wine the Body and Blood of the Lord which He has united with them. The unbelieving, unworthy communicant, therefore, also partakes of the Body and Blood. Indeed, the Scripture is very plain which declares that he is condemned because, being unworthy, he does partake of the Body of the Lord. The condemnation rests on this that he does not "discern" the Body, which he could not discern if it were not present. It is very clear, then, that a man can and may receive the Sacrament, in its fulness, and yet fail to receive the blessing of the Sacrament; nay more, he can receive the Body and Blood of

Christ, and yet, far from receiving remission, he can, by his unworthiness, burden his soul with that broken Body and that Blood shed for his sins.

It is expedient and necessary, then, that those who would come to the Sacrament of the Altar should make sure of their profitable access, and, to this end, in conformity with the teaching of the Scriptures, the Church has provided help for the earnest soul in the services preparatory to the Holy Communion. The oldest custom and the best, is for each one who wishes to receive the Sacrament, to come to the Pastor and notify him personally. Here is the opportunity which nothing else can give, for the pastoral care of souls, the shepherd learning to know his sheep, and using his knowledge to guide and protect them with shepherd wisdom as well as shepherd love. Here is the opportunity for true confession and absolution, the burdened soul laying its weight of sin and sorrow aside, in penitent acknowledgment, and the Pastor, by the authority of Christ committed to him, speaking to the individual, of whose contrition and faith he has made sure, the gracious words of divine forgiveness.

But, as the best substitute for the custom which has so largely come into disuse in our congregations, a public service of Confession and Absolution has

been provided. It is true that here only a conditional absolution can be spoken, and that much must be left to the conscience and judgment of the worshipper, which, in the private confession and absolution, can be better performed by the spiritual tact and wisdom of the Pastor. Nevertheless, the public service is of great value. By its means much aid can be supplied for the investigation of the real condition of the inner life; for the recognition of what is sinful, and its keen realization; for the clear understanding of the meaning and manifestations of a true penitence; for the awakening and deepening of the vital faith which relies upon the atoning merit of the Saviour; for the whole-hearted determination, the warm resolves, to amend the sinful life and to serve the Lord with a pure heart. No conscientious communicant will approach the Altar, under ordinary circumstances, without first having made use either of the private or the public service of preparation.

The chief value of the Preparatory Service is the help it affords in the examination, or "proving" of the life in the light of God's requirements. He who does not feel deeply His sin, cannot, with true faith, cling to Christ as his Saviour, and is unfit and unworthy to receive the Sacrament. By the law is

the knowledge of sin, and the law is succinctly expressed in the Ten Commandments. To test the heart and life by the will of God, is to examine oneself in the light of these Commandments. Their depth of meaning, their searching power have never been so well set forth as by Luther in his Catechism. Besides attending upon the Preparatory Service you will find it profitable to seek to know yourself by earnest, honest inquiry into your thoughts and words and deeds, in the silence of your secret place of prayer in the days that precede the approach to the Holy Supper. The "Aid to Self-Examination" that follows is intended to guide you in that inquiry, and is based upon the Ten Commandments with Luther's explanations.

PRAYERS.

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my thoughts;
And see if there be any way of wickedness
in me,
And lead me in the way everlasting.
(Ps. cxxxxix, 23, 24.)

Examine me, O Lord, and prove me;
Try my reins and my heart. (Ps. xxvi, 2.)

Heavenly Father, enlighten me, for Jesus Christ's sake, by Thy Holy Spirit, that I may

truly recognize, by means of the clear mirror of the Law, my manifold, great and grievous sins, and may earnestly consider and rightly estimate them. Make plain to me, Lord, the secret inborn corruption of my utterly perverted and evil nature; make me to see how from the evil treasure of my heart so many evil thoughts, words and deeds have sprung. Give me to understand the great misery and need into which my sins have brought me; for we poor, blind men can neither know nor believe, without Thy Word, how miserable we are, nor how severe and dreadful is Thy wrath against sin, nor with what inexpressible and eternal torment Thou wilt punish it in all unrepentant sinners, in the fires of hell. Therefore, dear God and Father, help me to understand, that I may not with the unrepentant world go on in false security and be destroyed. Awake in me through this knowledge wholesome fear and dread on account of my sin in view of Thy just wrath and the eternal penalty; for from Thee comes such wholesome fear. Give me the sacfice, well pleasing to Thee, of a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, that I may bring this sacrifice to Thee. Then draw me, O Father, to the Son, that I, defended from despair, may find confidence in Thy grace, and the peace which the world cannot give, by faith in His holy merit; that I through faith in Him, may overcome and forever hate the world and all that is in the world; that, at last, with all true

followers of Christ, I may be saved through grace! Amen. **(Wm. Loehe.)**

Almighty, merciful, dear Father, I pray Thee especially that Thou wouldst defend my soul, in this act of self-examination, from the deceitfulness of sin, for Jesus' sake; so that I may not walk in sin, and at the same time hide the state of my soul and its danger from myself. Thou dost show us our sins through Thy Word, but often we wilfully shut our eyes to the light, and set ourselves in resistance to our better knowledge. We have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, and our hearts are waxed gross, because we love darkness rather than light. From the enticement of this sin, from the spirit of deceit and falsehood, defend me, dear Lord God. Give me the one thing needful, a heart that does not stubbornly resist Thy Spirit and Thy truth; give me a true, sincere heart, and an earnest purpose to see myself in the true light, just as I am, Lord, Thou Holy, True God, Thou Who dost destroy liars and dost hate the false and before whom sincerity and humility are acceptable, Who dwellest only with the upright, receive my heart, my understanding, my vision, and for Jesus' sake let me see how I stand before Thee, that I may truly repent and find grace according to my need. Amen.

(Wm. Loehe.)

An Aid to Preparation.

Questions for Self-Examination, according to the Ten Commandments.

IN GENERAL.—Have you kept the vows made at your last Communion? Have you been obedient to the Holy Spirit? Have you hated and forsaken all manner of sin? Have you grown in holiness of heart and life? Or have you, when you had received absolution, fallen again into your former sins?

Is it with sorrow that you remember the sins of the past, earnestly wishing that you had never committed them?

Have you deliberately and purposely done what you knew at the time was against God's will?

Have you counted upon the grace of God even when committing sin, thus changing the grace of God into a ground for presumptuous sin?

Have you sought by deceit and falsehood to cover up sin, thus heaping sin on sin? Or have

you even made a boast of your sins, taking pride in your departure from God.

Do you realize and feel the loathsomeness of sin, and turn from it with abhorrence?

Do you go to the Preparatory Service in the spirit of true humility, sincerely seeking to see yourself as you are in God's sight, earnestly desiring to examine yourself in the searching light of His holy requirements, ready to confess to your own heart and to God in the presence of your fellow Christians, what you may find amiss in heart and life? Or do you go merely as a matter of custom and because it is your habit at certain times to do so?

Do you go believing that God is truly there, that He sees what is in your heart, knows how you have lived, hears your Confession, and truly speaks through His minister the Word of absolution? Do you believe that the Word of forgiveness brings that which it declares, and that God truly pardons, blots out, and casts behind His back all your sin, according as He sees in your heart penitence and faith?

Is your determination fixed and deep that you will depart from all that He shows you to be contrary to His Word and will, and is your heart "set to do His commandments?" Are you resolved, by His help, to make the future better than the past, and not to consent to any sin, even the dearest or the hardest to overcome?

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.

I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

What is meant by this Commandment?

Answer. We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

Do you in deed and truth recognize God as your Lord, the One Who has all might, the Ruler, Who has a right to control you, the Lawgiver, to Whose commands you owe perfect obedience? Or do you, in act, if not in words, question His authority?

Do you recognize in Him your God, the One supremely good, the One Who is Love, your Father, Whose tenderness is the source of all your joys,

from Whom cometh every good and perfect gift?

Has He the chief place in your thoughts, in your affections, in your aims? Is He in your life above all?

Is He to you a Real Person, are you conscious of Him as a living Presence, in Whom you live and move and have your Being? Or is your God but a name, a dead God, an empty idea, an intellectual conception with no influence on your life? Is He far away, instead of One Who permeates and fills everything? The God of the Hebrews, the God of the past, and not your God of to-day and of every place? Is He the God of the Church alone, and not of the home and of the place of business?

Do you reverence God? Do you stand in awe of Him, showing respect to the very place in which He is worshipped, the Word in which He comes to us, the Name by which He is known, and all that is connected with Him?

Do you fear Him? Do you dread His displeasure, not being afraid of Him, hiding yourself like Adam, but fearing to sin against Him, like Joseph?

Have you the fear of a child reverencing the authority of the father, and held back by that fear

from disobedience? Or have you the fear of a slave, obeying lest he feel the lash?

Are you afraid of driving God away from you by your sin, or are you afraid of His drawing near to you in your sin?

Does your fear of God hold you back from sin? Do you so fear Him as not to do the things He forbids? Or is it the fear of the results of sin, the punishment of sin, rather than the fear of God, that restrains you?

If He removed His penalties for the breaking of the law, would you straightway do the things that He hates?

Do you fear Him above all, or does the fear of man control you more than the fear of God? Do you dread the scorn or mocking of your companions more than you dread offending God? So that you would rather displease Him by infrequent attendance upon the Church and the Lord's Supper than gain the reputation of being too much in earnest in the Christian life, and thus become the subject of the laughter of others?

Is His judgment more to you than the opinion of men? Do you care more for His approval than for all other honors or applause?

Do you love God? With a warm affection, with a fervent devotion? Is He to you more loveworthy than your best love? Does His tenderness call out your answering tenderness? To His Fatherhood does your heart respond, "Abba, Father"?

Do you love what He loves and hate what He hates? Is it a joy to you to see Him honored and praised, to see His purposes fulfilled and His Name made known?

Do you love Him so that you care more for the accomplishment of His will than for the success of your own plans? So that you would rather help to have His kingdom come than to do aught else? So that you would rather give to Him than spend upon your own pleasures?

Does your love for Him lead you to have joy in serving Him? in ministering to the least of these His children, Christ's brethren? in giving your time, your personal energy in the work of His Church and of the ministry of mercy?

Do you love Him so that you delight in the law of the Lord, in the worship that is offered Him, in meditating upon His love and faithfulness? So that you love to pray to Him, to ponder the sweet message from Him to you, written in His Word? Do you love to be with Him, to be conscious of His nearness, to be assured that He, in His dear Son, is with you alway?

Does your love seek expression in grateful offerings? Do you show your love by doing what He loves? Do you often remember the word, "If ye love me ye will keep my commandments"?

Do you trust God? Are you confident that whatever comes to you is good and wise because He sends it? Do you firmly believe that all things work together for good to those that love Him?

Are you satisfied to leave all your affairs to His disposal? Can you join with the Psalmist in thanking God that your times are in His hands?

Do you rest secure in the knowledge that He will provide for you in all things? Do you trust with confidence in His promises? Is His Word the most certain assurance to you?

Are you patient under trials? Do you murmur and complain when He does not see fit to give you what you want? Are you unhappy and restive in sickness or poverty?

Do you fret yourself and give way to anxious care when in perplexing circumstances? Do you trust Him so that you have the peace of God? Or do you live in a state of inner conflict, not knowing the peace that passeth understanding? Do you give way to discouragement, as if God were not true, and His purposes not certain of fulfilment?

Do you trust Him for the forgiveness of sins through the redemption of Christ? Do you believe without doubting that His pardon is complete and perfect to every one that betakes himself to the Saviour? Does your heart rest and is it at peace in the assurance of salvation through the merits of Christ?

Do you trust God more than any other person or thing? Does God's promise give you more confidence than the promise of some rich or powerful man? Would you feel safer with plenty of money invested than you do with only God's assurances?

Would you like better to be under the protection of some man of great influence than to be in the hands of God?

Is the true God your God? What does your heart cling to above all? You do not bow the knee before any graven image, but what do you fear, love and trust above all? That is your God. Do you fear more than aught else the jeers or the condemnation of others? Do you trust above all, the friendship and help of others? Then your fellowmen are your god. Do you love more than aught else the satisfaction of your appetites, or the indulgence of your ease, or the achievement of your ambition, or the enjoyment of your pleasures, or the success of your business? Then these are your gods! Are you sure that you have no idol? Not even self? Is self subordinate to God?

Can you say that you have not broken the First Commandment?

Lord have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this law!

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain.

What is meant by this Commandment?

Answer. We should so fear and love God as not to curse, swear, conjure, lie, or deceive by His Name, but call upon Him in every time of need, and worship Him with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.

Do you bow before the Name of God? Do you reverence Him as He has revealed Himself to us? Do you adore Him as the Almighty, the Allseeing, the Everywhere-present One? Do you worship Him as infinitely righteous, infinitely gracious, infinitely loving and good? Do you meditate on Him in His perfections?

Do you render to God and to holy things the homage of your spirit? Are you reverent, in heart and deed, before Him?

Do you misuse His holy Name? Do you speak that Name lightly, thoughtlessly? Do you make jokes about sacred things, perhaps about passages of the Word of God? Do you use God's Name in anger, denouncing curses on your fellow-man, claiming God's sole prerogative of judging and condemning? Or do you, without meaning, as a mat-

ter of sinful habit, profane His Name by cursing and swearing? Do you swear, in thoughtless speech as the custom of many is, by the heaven, which is His throne; or by the earth, which is His footstool, or by some foolish and meaningless oath? He says, "Swear not at all."

Do you revere the sacredness of an oath, when called upon by lawful authority, to swear for the purpose of revealing truth and punishing wickedness? Do you use your influence to lead others to realize the awfulness of an oath, and to oppose false swearing? Do you recognize the great sinfulness of perjury and do you pray and strive to prevent its terrible frequency?

Do you realize that the vow of your Baptism, which you repeated in the Name of God, at your confirmation, includes all that you can rightly vow, except when it becomes your duty to take oath by authority of Church or State? Do you therefore refuse to take needless oaths?

Do you take heed not to give occasion to others to profane the Name of God by cursing and swearing?

Do you speak so idly or untruthfully that there is need of your confirming your words by an oath?

Do you seek to know the mysteries which God has not been pleased to reveal? Do you practice or encourage the works of superstition? Do you meet with those who would hold communion with departed spirits, instead of resting content with what God's Word tells of the other world? Do you help to support those who pretend to the knowledge which God alone holds, such as fortune-tellers, astrologers and the like? Do you pry eagerly into the hidden things of darkness?

Do you lie or deceive by the Name of God? Do you encourage the teaching of what is not God's Word as if it were? Do you think it makes no difference whether the truth of God is purely taught, or whether something else is taught as His truth? Are you indifferent to false doctrine, as if it made no difference whether God was known and worshipped as He has revealed Himself or otherwise?

Do you use the Name of God which you profess, to hide an evil life? Do you forget the "Woes" of Christ for the hypocrites? Do you bear the Name

of Christ in order to gain some worldly advantage, or to win the confidence of men, making merchandise of sacred things?

Have you forgotten that "Whoever lives or teaches otherwise than as God's Word prescribes, profanes the Name of God among us?"

If you have not misused the Name of God, is it nevertheless the case that you have taken it in vain by not using it? Do you commune with God, calling upon Him in every time of need? Do you use His Name, worshipping Him with prayer, praise and thanksgiving? Do you cry to Him in your needs and trials? Do you pray? Does your heart go out to Him in true yearning, or do you simply "say your prayers"? Do the words of prayer express what is in your heart, or do you profane His Name by calling upon Him with your lips, while the heart is far from Him? In the worship of the Church, do you think what you sing and say, or is your mind busy with other things while you are in the attitude and acts of worship?

Do you worship Him with praise? Do you exult in His greatness, His goodness, His glory? Do

you praise Him that He is so pure, so loving, so adorable? Do you acknowledge that He is more praiseworthy than all our praise? Do you call upon your soul and all that is within you to bless His holy Name?

Do you worship Him with thanksgiving? Do you remember all His goodnesses? Do you thank Him for the sunshine and the rain, for pure air and water, "food, raiment, money, goods, house and land and other property; for a believing spouse and good children; trustworthy servants and faithful magistrates; favorable seasons, peace and health; education and honor; true friends, good neighbors and the like?" You do not fail, perhaps, to ask Him for your daily bread, but do you forget to thank Him for it?

Do you keep this commandment, in so far as you have kept it, out of fear and love to God? If you have not misused His Name, if you have used it for the purpose for which it was given, has it been merely out of habit, in accustomed forms of life and conduct that you have done so, or was it from

the impulse to please Him? If fear and love to God was not the motive you have not kept the commandment, and the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His Name in vain?

Can we say that we have not broken this Commandment?

Lord have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this law.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

What is meant by this Commandment?

Answer. We should so fear and love God as not to despise His Word and the preaching of the Gospel, but deem it holy and willingly hear and learn it.

Do you, in your heart, recognize God's right to one day out of seven, as His Day in a peculiar sense, or do you begrudge it to Him? Do you want all the time for your own purposes of gain? Are you not willing to cease from your work that He may the more freely work in you? Are you not willing to cease from your pleasures that you may

be led by Him to taste the more fully the pleasures that do not pass away?

Do you keep the Lord's Day as a holy day, or as a holiday? Do you spend it in idleness and ease, as a day of cessation from labor or as a day of God?

Is your favorite companion on that day the Sunday newspaper, and other works of folly and fiction, or the Bible, the message of eternal truth?

Do you realize the necessity and the inestimable value of a day for worship, Bible Study and Christian fellowship? Do you consider what it would mean for the world of men, for society, for the Church, if there were no day set apart for rest and worship? Do you help by example and influence to preserve the day, with its hallowed spirit and associations for ourselves and our children?

Do you devote the day to the Church, the Sunday-school and the ministry of love to the sick and sorrowing?

Do you attend as often as you can do so upon the preaching of the Word and the worship of God's House? Do you love to meet thus with the people of God, and to hear His Word? Is this as dear to

you as the engagements of business and pleasure, so that you would not let anything keep you from the services of God's House which would not keep you from other duties? If you sum up your influence, on which side do you find it, for or against the sanctifying of the Lord's Day?

Do you despise His Word and the preaching of the Gospel by coming to hear it only when you can find nothing else to do, or only from the force of habit, or only at long intervals, though He is here to meet His people twice every Lord's Day?

Do you appreciate the Feast of the Body and Blood of the Lord, which He provides, in His House on His Day? Do you come and use this Heavenly Food? Do you so feel your need of the strength and grace offered in the Sacrament that you rejoice in the invitation, and frequently accept it, or do you think that once or twice in the year suffices for you?

Do you deem the Word and its preaching holy? Do you hear and receive it as in very deed the Word of God, or do you criticise and neglect it as if it were the word of men? Are you more interested in

the length or the style or the delivery of the sermon than in its message?

Do you understand that the Lord's Day is hallowed only by the Word of God? Do you know that every moment of time spent in the reading or study of the Word is holy? that every day ought to be holy, and do you make it so? What place has the Word in your life? Do you have a daily time for its regular reading? Do you read it as a message of God to your own soul? Do you pray for the light of the Holy Spirit that as you read you may understand and be profited? Do you practice what you read, thoughtfully pondering the Word, and carrying it with you into the world? Do you gladly embrace every opportunity that you can use for the study of the Word, the understanding of its deeper meaning? Or are you one of those foolish Christians who imagine that they can please God and keep their baptismal vow without the Word, the preaching of the Gospel, the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood, or the Church?

Do you willingly hear and learn the Word? Is your delight in the law of the Lord? Would you

rather read and study it than the writings of men who were not borne along by the Holy Ghost? Do you so love the Word and the Church which exists for the Word, that you willingly accept service in the Church, gladly help to provide and arrange for its public worship, take the offices to which you may be called in the Sunday-school, or in the organization of the congregation?

Can we say that we have not broken this Commandment?

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law!

THE SECOND TABLE.

IN GENERAL.—Do you understand the spirit of these Commands? Is it evident to you that "if a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar"? (I Jno. iv, 20.) Do you realize that "he who loveth God" must "love his brother also"? Do you know that your neighbor is your brother? Have you the lawyer's definition of a neighbor, which would confine your neighbor to your acquaintance, or your friend? Do you recognize your neighbor

in every fellow-man of whatever race, in whatever clime? Is his claim on you admitted in your heart and in your life? Have you the desire to "show yourself neighbor" to every man? Do you love men, not for their attractiveness, but as men? Are you conscious of the fact that a man may be very uncongenial to you, even disagreeable to you and yet that something may have been born in him, or may be born in him of God? Is Christ in a man a sufficient reason to you for loving him? Is the fact that he has need of Christ in him a sufficient reason? Do you see the impossibility of keeping the commandments of the Second Table without love? Do you see that love is the fulfilment of the law? That if you love your neighbor you have no temptation to dishonor, to kill, to slander him? Is your heart eager to love men as Christ loved them? Do you pray for more love, for an all-embracing love in your heart?

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

What is meant by this Commandment?

Answer. We should so fear and love God as not to despise or displease our parents or superiors, but honor, serve, obey, love and esteem them.

Do you see God in those whom He has appointed to represent Him? Do you acknowledge Him by giving obedience to those whom He has placed over you? Do you honor your parents, if God has spared them to you? Have you the spirit of respect and of reverence toward them? Do you serve them, and is your service ungrudging? Do you obey them, promptly, cheerfully, whether what they command is agreeable to you or not? Do you esteem them, giving full credit for all that is excellent in their lives and characters? And is this honor, service and obedience given out of pure love to them? Do you remember the word, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord"? Do you think what they have done for you? Do you try to estimate their sacrifices and efforts for your welfare? Do you realize that you can never fully repay them?

Is it your habit to give reverence to the aged?

to those in the family circle, among the kindred, and also to strangers? Are you thoughtful toward them, choosing not always the companionship of the young but showing love also for the old and seeking to cheer them? Are you respectful to their opinions and advice, even though they may seem to you old-fashioned?

How do you bear yourself toward your superiors in the school? Do you give them obedience and respect? Are you guided by their wishes? Do you help them to do their work for your improvement? Do you make their task as difficult or as easy as possible?

What is your behavior toward your superiors in the Church? Do you realize that their office is from God, and that He gives them authority? Do you give heed to the command (Heb. xiii, 17), "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit to them; for they watch in behalf of your souls as they that shall give account"? Do you defer to the judgment of the pastors, elders and offices of the Church? Do you obey, in your measure, the instructions of the governing bodies of the Church,

her Councils and Synods? Do you honor the teachers of religion, in the Sunday-school, and the week-day instruction? Are you faithful in doing the tasks appointed in responding to their guidance? Do you respect the office of a pastor and acknowledge the authority of that office? Do you receive the Word as Christ's minister preaches it, as in truth the Word of God, and not of man? Do you recognize the call of God in your appointment to special service?

Do you recognize the duty you owe to those by whom you are employed? Are you "obedient to them who are your masters according to the flesh, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ"? Do you show respect and give honor to them? Do you serve God in serving them?

Do you reverence and obey the authorities of the city, the State and the Nation? Do you render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's? Do you recognize the "powers that be" as "of God"? Do you perform the duties of a good citizen, respect and obey the laws, and seek to secure their enforce-

ment? Do you pray for all those in authority, and acknowledge your Christian responsibility in choosing those who are to govern us?

Even if parents and superiors do not deserve and cannot receive esteem and love, do you serve and obey them and give them honor in all that they have a right to claim?

Are you a parent? Do you "provoke your children to wrath"? Do you bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Do you seek to deserve and to draw out their love, esteem and obedience? If you are set over others in any relation, in the State, the Church, the home, or the business world, you are responsible for such conduct toward those under you as will help them in rendering what is due to you. Are you faithful in giving such encouragement?

Can we say that we have not broken this Commandment?

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law!

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.

What is meant by this Commandment?

Answer. We should so fear and love God as not to do our neighbor any bodily harm or injury, but rather assist and comfort him in danger and want.

Have you kept this Commandment? Are you free from the guilt of Cain and of Joseph's brethren? Do you reverence bodily life, even the innocent, joyous life of the birds and beasts? Do you ever take life, of any kind, thoughtlessly, wantonly, cruelly? Are you careful to avoid cruelty to animals, and to assist in preventing it?

Have you resented injury by doing injury to your neighbor? Are you like the forgiven man, who took by the throat his neighbor who owed him an hundred pence and haled him to prison? What do you do when you are smitten on one cheek? Perhaps you have not fought with others and wounded their bodies in anger, but are you sure you have done no bodily harm to your neighbor? Are you the owner of houses, in which, for the sake of

more gain, men are deprived of light and air, and their bodies suffer harm? Or if not, are you responsible for the hurtful and destructive conditions in which many are forced to live to their bodily injury? What is your share of guilt in the guilt of the community where such things are not prohibited by the law, or the law is not enforced? Or, as an employer, do you disregard the requirements of health, in the conditions by which you surround those who labor for you, or in the demands you make of them? Have you a guilt like that of the Egyptian taskmasters, who made the Israelites toil beyond their power in the brickyards of Egypt? Do you think of and care for the bodily welfare of those over whom you have control?

Have you learned the lesson of Christ, that he that is angry with his brother is guilty of murder? Do you realize that you cannot keep this Commandment unless the heart is free from the spirit that would do harm to your brother? Are you a murderer in the sense of the text which reads, "He that hateth his brother is a murderer?" Do you cherish hatred against any one in your heart? Do you give

way to anger? Are you impatient of temper, hot and quick to wrath? Do you refuse to forgive those who have offended you? Are you one of those who look for offense and see it where it is not meant? Do you pride yourself on your remembrance of injury? Do you seek to be revenged? Would you like to see him who has wronged you suffer in body and property? Are you of a revengeful spirit? Do you give way to a desire to cause pain, to do or say the thing that would hurt your neighbor?

How is it with the bodily life that God has given you? Do you realize the awful sin of self-murder? the guilt of Saul and Judas, the suicides? In times of discouragement do you, like Elijah, desire death? Do you injure your own body, by disregard of the laws of health, by indulgence of the appetites, by the intemperate use of food, the indulgence in luxury, or in gluttony, of however refined a type? Do you hurt your body with strong drink, or with drugs, or with the misuse of anything God has placed in His world? Do you weaken your body by too great indulgence in things innocent in themselves, such as pursuing pleasures too far until ex-

citement and late hours have done you harm? Or are you endangering your health by intemperate devotion to business pursuits? Do you understand that "the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment"? (Matt. vi, 25.)

Do you appreciate and obey the other side of this Commandment? Are you eager to "assist and comfort" your neighbor, "in danger and want"? Do you recognize the truth that he who can and does not rescue the starving and care for the sick, is guilty of their suffering or death? Do you seek out and aid the poor and needy who are within your reach? Do you give, as God has prospered you for the relief of suffering and the supply of the necessities of life? Do you rejoice to help the poor, the homeless, those who have no employment? Do you give for the Orphan's Home, the Home for the Aged and other institutions of Christian mercy? Are you of the kindred of the Good Samaritan, or of the priest and Levite who "passed by on the other side"? Do you value and cultivate the spirit of pure kindliness? Do you assist and comfort all whom you meet by your cheerfulness and good

courage? Does your heart of love manifest itself in all your dealings with your neighbor?

Can we say that we have kept this Commandment?

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law!

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

What is meant by this Commandment?

Answer. We should so fear and love God as to be chaste and pure in our words and deeds, each one also loving and honoring his wife or her husband.

Does this Commandment bring reproach to you as husband or wife? Have you kept your marriage vow? Do you live together in purity and mutual reverence? Do you realize that impurity and unchastity is possible also between husband and wife? Do you honor each other? Do you as a husband obey the apostolic injunction, that "each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in the passion of lust, even as the Gentiles which know not God"? (I Thes. iv, 4, 5.) Do you recognize even in the phys-

ical relations of marriage, the obligation to remember God? Do you that are married truly love each other? Do you accept and adopt the Scriptural view that "children are a heritage of the Lord"? (Ps. cxxvii, 3.) Or do you seek to avoid the responsibilities and burdens of parenthood, and go near to incurring the guilt of murder? Do you recognize the life-long obligation of the marriage vow, and set yourself against the current laxity in reference to divorce and the remarriage of divorced persons? Do you take Christ's view of this question and believe that "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another committeth adultery; and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery"? (Matt. xix, 9.) Do you act upon this rule in your social relations, and refuse to recognize, as living in honorable marriage, those who, according to Christ's word, are living in adultery?

Do you keep the spirit of this Commandment, which has the welfare and security of the home as its object? Do you in every way, seek to make home happy? to show love and kindness to wife and child? to live in the spirit of prayer and unselfish-

ness? to be as courteous and kind to those of the household, as to those whom you meet in business and social relations?

Do you realize that "God called us not for uncleanness, but in sanctification"? (I Thes. iv, 7.) Are you free from those sins of uncleanness which are not even to be named among you, as becometh saints? (Eph. v, 3, 4.) Do the unmarried understand that this Commandment has a message of warning and exhortation also to them? Do you remember that "no fornicator, nor unclean person, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God"? Have you taken to heart the solemn question, "Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot?" Are you guilty of any secret and solitary sin against purity? Have you a share in the awful guilt of betraying and ruining a life hitherto pure? Do you not fear to go to hell dragging with you another soul?

Are you pure in thought as well as in deed and in word? Have you broken the Commandment in the spirit of Christ's own interpretation of it, "Every

one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart"? Have you kept yourself from the impure thought, the curious imagining, the lustful desire? Have you sinned in your heart? Do you love impurity? Do you seek after the book which has the reputation of dealing with suggestive themes, the pictures which minister to the depraved mind, the theatrical exhibitions which offend the purity of the soul that has not been soiled by the custom of the age? Do you love the "filthiness and foolish talking and jesting which are not befitting"? Do you repeat the foul story and the filthy details of the current scandal? Do you take pleasure in the awakening of the evil desires?

Do you reverence the body and the pure purposes for which God made it? Do you take care not to lose the sense of holy shame? Do you guard the eyes from every impure sight, and the ears from unchaste words, and the lips that they speak no foulness?

Do you consider the nobleness and the manliness of purity? Do you realize that there are not two standards of purity, but only one for the man and

for the woman alike? Do you reverence and imitate the pure manliness of the young Joseph, and remember that it was to a young man that St. Paul wrote, "Keep thyself pure"? Do you, as a man, speak no word in the presence of men that would be unfit for the ear of a pure woman? Do you in words and deeds, so live that there is nothing which you would be ashamed for your sister or mother to know?

Is your influence steadily set on the side of purity? Are you free from guilt for the existence and extent of the "social evil"? Does your heart bleed at the sight or the thought of the thousands of lost women on our streets, victims of man's bestial lust? If you are an owner of property are you careful that it is used for no base purpose? Do you feel and endeavor to discharge your duty, as a member of society and a Christian citizen, for the uplifting of every pure and ennobling force and the overthrow of all that is base?

Do you obey the Commandment in its real significance, so fearing and loving God "as to be chaste and pure in words and deeds"?

Can we say that we have kept this Commandment?

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not steal.

What is meant by this Commandment?

Answer. We should so fear and love God as not to rob our neighbor of his money or property, nor bring it into our possession by unfair dealing or fraudulent means, but rather assist him to improve and protect it.

Have you kept this Commandment? You are doubtless free from the guilt of burglary, or picking of pockets, but are you sure that you have not in any way robbed your neighbor of his money or property? Have you never, like Zacchaeus, "wrongfully exacted" of any man? Have you, like him, made full and ample restitution? If there is, on your conscience, any sin or dishonest dealing, and you have not, to the utmost of your power, repaid what another has lost by your sin, your repentance has not been deep or genuine, you are yet in your sins. How is it with you in regard to your

employees, your house-servants, any who work for you? Have you paid them fair wages? Have you tried to get from them more in work than an equivalent for what they received in money? Have you discharged men, leaving them helpless, when you could have retained them, though at a diminshed profit to yourself? Have you delayed the payment of a servant or employee, for your own convenience, disregarding his right and his need? Have you taken thought for those whom you have power to oppress?

Have you been, and are you, scrupulously honest in all your dealings with your brother-man? Do you measure honest dealing by the standard of the world, or by the standard of God, and the requirements of Christian manhood? Have you kept your integrity not only in transactions with individuals, but with the impersonal corporations? Have you encouraged yourself in unfair and dishonest acts by the plausible phrase, "Corporations have no souls," forgetting that you have one, and that you must keep it unsullied? Do you deal honestly not only for the sake of your neighbor, but for the sake of your own honor? Have you robbed the

State? Do you fairly and truly make return of your property, and pay the taxes which the State has a right to require of you? Are you of those who at the same time perjure themselves and steal by dishonest "swearing off" of taxes? Are you honest in little things are well as in large? Do you take care not to evade the payment of street-car fare, not to pretend that your child is under the age for full payments, not to take advantage of an error in your favor in the making of change? Do you perceive that it is contemptible to sell your honesty for a nickel, or a dollar, and that the sin is as great as when the gain is greater?

Do you practice unfair dealings in your business? Is what you sell exactly what you declare it to be? Do you cheat, by adulterated goods or by exorbitant prices, or by substitutions for a better thing of one "just as good" but with a higher profit for you? Do you realize and act upon the truth that in an honest business transaction both parties are benefited?

Do you make debts and not pay them, or do you pay them only after putting your creditor to unnecessary trouble and expense in their collection?

Do you remember that he who buys without knowing how he can pay is simply a thief? Do you borrow, not only money, but books, or articles of any sort and forget to return them or at last restore them in a damaged condition?

As an employee do you give full value for your wages? Do you work as faithfully behind your employer's back as before his face? Do you use any of the minutes for which he pays you, for purposes of your own, or simply for idling? Do you realize that such conduct is theft as truly as if you took money out of his till? Do you put your best effort into your work for another, equally as much as if you were working for yourself? Would you take advantage of a legal technicality for your own profit?

Do you seek to obtain that which is your neighbor's without rendering him any equivalent, by laying wagers or making bets with him? Do you care so much for money and property that you gamble in order to obtain it? Do you speculate in stocks and bonds? Can you ask God's blessing on your dealings in gambling and betting, whether you call them by that name or not? Has the craze for

money taken possession of you so that you are more eager to have it than careful how you get it? Have you adopted the world's standards of success, defining it in terms of gain? Do you believe God's Word concerning riches, such as, "How hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God" (Mk. x, 24.) "They that desire to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and hurtful lusts, such as drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil"? (I Tim. vi, 9, 10.) Or do you simply laugh at such warnings?

Do you want to make gain of another's loss? Do you regard your neighbor's interests, as well as your own, in all your dealings? In the issues between labor and capital do you seek to do as you would be done by, to act with absolute fairness to both sides, to see the advantage to both in the welfare of each? Have you taken no advantage of the ignorance or carelessness of another in your transactions? Do you recognize the fact that your business is not to be conducted for yourself alone, but for your neighbor also, and for the glory of God? Do

you pray over your business? Do you take God in as the silent partner?

Have you been honest with the Lord? "Will a man rob God?" asked the prophet (Mal. iii, 8-10), and straightway answers his question, "Yet ye have robbed me." Have you brought the tithes and offerings into the storehouse? Have you bestowed your goods according to the will of Him whose trustee you are? Are you making the mistake of supposing that your money is your own, and dishonestly using it regardless of the purposes of its real owner, God? Somebody is making that mistake, as the languishing enterprises of Christ's Church clearly show. Have you defrauded the cause of Christ, His missions, His congregations, His representatives, of that which He would have had you bestow on them?

Why are you honest? Why have you kept the outward form of this injunction? Because "honesty is the best policy"? Because you want the esteem of men? Have you obeyed, in so far as you did obey, because the fear of God has held you back from dishonesty, and because the love of God has pushed you forward to do what pleases Him? Would

you rather be rich toward God, than rich in this world's gains?

Can we say that we have kept this Commandment?

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

What is meant by this Commandment?

Answer. We should so fear and love God as not deceitfully to belie, betray, slander, nor raise injurious reports against our neighbor, but apologize for him, speak well of him, and put the most charitable construction on all his actions.

Have you kept this one? Do you love the truth and walk in the truth? Do you hate a lie, and the father of it? Is all falsity abominable in your sight? Do you understand that every word and every act is a bearing of witness, and do you take pains not to bear false witness in any way? Have you tamed the tongue, so that it speaks no word of untruth? Do you feel deeply the responsibility of speech? Does your "yea" mean "yea" and your

"nay" mean "nay"? Is your "word as good as your bond"? Would you speak the same things as you do speak, if there were no such things as an oath, so that you have no need to swear? Will you speak the truth even though it cost something? May it be said of you, as of the godly man of the Psalm (xv), that "he sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not"? Can men count on you and your word? Are you, yourself, true? Do your words and acts proceed from a sincere heart? Are you free from deceitfulness? Has your life the simplicity of one who has nothing to conceal? Do you abhor alike the falseness of the liar and of the hypocrite. Is your profession of Christ genuine, not assumed for the favor of men?

Are you careful not to belie your neighbor, not to misrepresent him in any way? Can he give you his confidence without danger of your betraying him under any temptation of fear or gain? Are you to be trusted? Are you given to slander? Do you "take up a reproach against your neighbor"? Do you love slander? Is it a pleasure to hear others evil spoken of? Do you refuse to speak or to listen to unfriendly gossip? An injurious report against

a neighbor runs with amazing rapidity through a community. Are you one of those who helps its dissemination? Could such rumors spread so swiftly if every Christian kept this Commandment? Will you refrain even from repeating an injurious report unless it is really a duty? Are you of those whom St. Paul describes as "whisperers," "backbiters"? And do you realize the wickedness of this sin and class it with the universally recognized abominable sins, as St. Paul does? (Rom. i, 29, 30.) Or are you of those who shrink from sins against the fifth and sixth and seventh Commandments, but with impunity break the eighth? Is not this the common sin of Christian people? Is it yours?

Do you so love your neighbor that when others speak ill of him, you defend him? Do you speak well of your neighbor? Do you cultivate the habit enjoined by the Apostle (Phil. ii, 3), "in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself"? Do you see only the faults of others, like the buzzard, which in all the glorious landscape, discerns only the putrid carrion? Have you the habit of seeking for the good in men? Do you love to point it out? Do you say nothing, if you can say nothing

good of a man? And, whatever his acknowledged faults, do you give him credit for every virtue that he has?

Will you apologize for one who is evil spoken of? If you cannot deny his sin, will you, at least, recognize the peculiar temptations and weaknesses which may help to excuse it? Do you put yourself in his place before you condemn? Would you be what you are, had you been surrounded with the influences which have formed many? Will you not be kindly in your judgments, if indeed it is your place and right to judge? If there be a doubt of your neighbor's guilt, will you give him the benefit of the doubt? If his actions be susceptible of two constructions, do you put the most charitable construction upon them? Do you realize the great wrong that may be done, by imputing the baser motive instead of the better? Have you read and pondered II Samuel x, 1-6? Or have you remembered the misinterpretation of the motives of our Lord in reference to the undoubted fact that he associated with publicans and sinners? Would you have been of those who put the charitable or the uncharitable construction on those actions of His?

Do you insist upon thinking the best until the worst is proven? Have you the love which "thinketh no evil"? Do you keep this Commandment in its essence, "speaking the truth in love"? And is it the fear and love of God that moves you to keep it, or simply an easy good nature?

Can we say that we have kept this Commandment?

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law!

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house.

What is meant by this Commandment?

Answer. We should so fear and love God as not to desire by craftiness to gain possession of our neighbor's inheritance or home, or to obtain it under the pretext of a legal right, but be ready to assist and serve him in the preservation of his own.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.

What is meant by this Commandment?

Answer. We should so fear and love God as not to alienate our neighbor's wife from him, entice away his servants, nor let loose his cattle, but use our endeavors that they may remain and discharge their duty to him.

Have you kept this Commandment? Do you realize how seriously God regards the condition of the heart, as evidenced by the repetition of this injunction, which applies only to the heart? Have you understood that "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies"? Do you see that to covet the neighbor's wife, is to break the sixth commandment, in the heart; to covet the neighbor's house or property is to break the seventh; and that all coveting leads to the danger of hatred or even murder, and the breaking of the fifth commandment? Is it clear to you that, after all, what God wants and demands is no mere outward keeping of the law, but a heart that is free from evil? Are you prone to be satisfied with actions, and to disregard thoughts, feelings, desires? Do you think with the Lord, that what a man is matters more than anything else, that what he is determines what he does? Do you shudder, therefore, at the evil

that you descry in the recesses of your soul? Do you lament every wandering thought of evil, every ill-regulated desire, every godless ambition, every outbreathing of discontent? Do you agree with the Lord when He calls the covetous man an idolater? (Eph. v, 5.)

And are you disposed to be satisfied with what the Lord has provided for you, so that you are not self-tempted to covet? Do you accept the injunction, "having food and raiment let us therewith be content"? Are you willing to take the Lord's promise as sufficient, wherein He holds forth the necessary things of the body as all which we have a right to expect? (See Matt. vi, 31-33.) Or, do you think you are mistreated because you have not the luxuries of the world? Do you chafe because you must practice economies? Do you envy those who have plenty of money and nothing to do but to please themselves? Do you complain in your heart because you must work, because your life is toilsome? Do you wish for the distribution of your neighbor's wealth, that you may have a larger share? Are you fretful and complaining because of the limitations under which you live? Have you

learned the lesson which St. Paul had mastered in circumstances of far greater trial than yours, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content"? (Phil. iv, 11). Is contentment the habit of your life? Does the peace and joy of contentment shine out in your cheery bearing? Do you look not on your own things but also on the things of others? Can you rejoice in the prosperity of others, without coveting their possessions or happiness? Have you, in your heart, the love of God and the love of your neighbor, so that you do not need nor desire aught but what your own resources supply? Are you willing to be judged not only by your deeds but by the secret desires of your heart?

Can we say that we have kept these commandments?

Lord, have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this law.

PRAYERS.

O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy wrath:
Neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure.
For mine iniquities are gone over mine head;
As an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.
(Ps. xxxviii.)

Hear my prayer, O Lord! give ear to my supplications;
In Thy faithfulness answer me, and in Thy righteousness.
And enter not into judgment with Thy servant;
For in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. (Ps. cxliii.)

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness:
According to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out all my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin,
For I acknowledge my transgressions:
And my sin is ever before me.
Hide Thy face from my sins,
And blot out all mine iniquities;
Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a right spirit within me,
Cast me not away from Thy presence;
And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
(Ps. li.)

O God, my sins have gone over my head, they are become without number, like the sands of the sea! As a heavy burden they are become too heavy for me. I have lived and acted after the will of the prince of this world, according to the lusts of my flesh. I have lived in vain thoughts, in idle words, in foolish deeds, in blindness of the heart, in self-love, in the feigned appearance of righteousness and piety,

in an impure, dead faith. I have not withstood with earnestness the incitements and impulses of the evil spirit and of the flesh, but, rather, a thousand times have I listened to and obeyed them instead of the faithful warnings and invitations of God my Lord and of His Holy Spirit; and thus I have despised the precious counsel of my God, have dishonored His holy Name, have offended Him. For all these things I sorrow and in my heart repent of them. God be merciful to me, the sinner! Amen. (Loehe.)

Lord, to Thee I make confession
I have sinned and gone astray.
I have multiplied transgression,
Chosen for myself my way.
Forced at last to see my errors,
Lord, I tremble at Thy terrors.

Yet, though conscience' voice appall me,
Father, I will seek Thy face;
Though Thy child I dare not call me,
Yet receive me to Thy grace;
Do not for my sins forsake me,
Let not yet Thy wrath o'ertake me.

For Thy Son hath suffered for me,
And the Blood He shed for sin,
That can heal me and restore me,
Quench this burning fire within;
'Tis alone His Cross can vanquish
These dark fears, and soothe this anguish.

Then on Him I cast my burden,
  Sink it in the depths below!
Let me feel Thy gracious pardon,
  Wash me, make me white as snow.
Let Thy Spirit leave me never,
Make me only Thine for ever!

(John Frank, 1649.)
(Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1862.)

The Wedding Garment.

We have looked in the mirror of the Law and have seen ourselves all robed in tatters, our garments spotted with the flesh, our very righteousnesses naught but filthy rags. Our hearts have shuddered with horror at ourselves, a deeper horror at the thought of what we must be in the pure sight of the Holy God! Surely we must have cast away all self-complacency, all delusion that we are as we ought to be, all thought of indifference as if we were not in need of a great salvation. If our prayer has not been empty we have cast off our sin-stained robes with the abhorrence of a true penitence. We have come in the abiding power of our Baptism, to a deep and real renewal of the "daily sorrow and repentance" which the baptismal vow includes. Not only sorrow but rejection of sin is in the will and purpose of our hearts. To know sin, to know and recognize my sins, to be grieved and sorrowful that I have sinned, to loathe and abhor sin, to be resolved with full determination of heart and will to hate

and forsake all manner of sin—this is repentance, and this is the "putting away of the filth of the flesh" (I Pet. iii, 21), the stripping off of the defiled clothing of the old Adam.

Yet we may not be unclothed. As we would enter His hall of wine, His place of banqueting, we must be fitly robed. Blessed be His Name, He not only provides the Feast, but He offers each guest the garment worthy of the wedding-supper. It is a seamless robe, white, pure, shining in spotlessness. It is the garment of the righteousness of Christ. As when the King's son, Jonathan, to manifest his love for the shepherd boy, clothed him, from head to foot, with his own royal raiment (I Sam. xviii, 1-4), so Christ, Son of the Eternal King, more loving than Jonathan, put on His own blessed Body the shameful clothing of my sins, and laid up for me, the precious raiment of His sinlessness. And now, again He bids me wear it, He stands ready to wrap it around me. He waits only to hear the assurance of my trust in Him. "Dost thou believe, sinner, for whom I hung upon the cross, that I bore thy sins in my own Body on the tree?" I hear Him whisper in my ear. And from

my heart rises up the surge of overflowing faith, of trustful self-surrender, of longing desire to commit myself to Him "Who hath redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, secured and delivered me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil"; I feel the yearning to "be His, live under Him in His Kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness." How can I doubt Him, His love, or His power, or His pardon? "Lord, I believe," my soul answers back to Him. And around me He enfolds the stainless robe, and tenderly He leads me into the place of blessedness and gives me to sit down at the Table of His Love, not afraid for the Master of the Feast to look upon me!

This is the wedding-garment, the pardoning grace of God in Jesus Christ Who hath redeemed me; the grace of God that has changed my heart and filled it with firm purpose to amend my sinful way and to belong in devoted life and service to my Saviour. How wonderful that pardoning grace! How amazing that He took my place, bore my sin, suffered in my stead, endured my penalty, atoned for my guilt, that the "chastisement of my peace

was upon Him," and that "with His stripes, I am healed." (Isa. liii.) How simple the promise and the plan. I have only to trust my Lord Jesus, to rely on what He has done and suffered for me, and I receive His righteousness and the Father sees me clothed in His spotless raiment. This is the Gospel, O soul, burdened with sin! This is the Gospel that saves. This is the Gospel that shines in its completest clearness, power and beauty in the Feast of the Body and the Blood of the Atoning Christ!

Hast thou repented? Hast thou accepted Christ for thy Saviour, pleading His merit, counting upon "His holy and precious Blood, His innocent sufferings and death," committing thine acceptance before God wholly and confidently to Him? Hast thou yielded to His Incoming Spirit, given thee in thy Baptism, renewed to thee ten thousand times in Word and Sacrament, Who entering hath bestowed upon thee the new heart, the new will to do God's will, the new determination to live day by day a more godly and holy life? Art thou resolved, as never before, "forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, to press toward the mark for the prize

of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," using the new strength to honor Him by new service, in fuller devotion to Him, as First in thy life? Then, if this be true, Christ hath put on thee the wedding-garment, and thou mayest freely enter and feast upon the Food and Drink of Heaven.

PRAYER.

O merciful and gracious God, I thank Thee that Thou hast revealed to all men, the righteousness which avails before God, in the forgiveness of sins, and that we are counted righteous for no deeds of our own, but through faith in Jesus Christ and in His Blood, alone. I come, O God, in this my accepted time, to consider the things that make for my peace.

I pray Thee for a true sincere faith, to grasp and to hold fast the heavenly benefit of pardon, that I may be renewed from day to day in the spirit of my heart, that I may be steadfast, that I may forever turn away from worldly lusts and godless living, that I may abide in Thy fear and love unto the end, and that I may wait for the coming of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ with a good conscience and with joy. Amen.

(Loehe.)

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who

has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, secured and delivered me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with silver and gold, but with his holy and precious blood, and with his innocent sufferings and death; in order that I might be His, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness; even as He is risen from the dead and lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Ghost has called me through the gospel, enlightened me by His gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith; in like manner as He calls, gathers, enlightens and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ in the true faith; in which Christian Church He daily forgives abundantly all my sins, and the sins of all believers, and will raise up me and all the dead at the last day, and will grant everlasting life to me and to all who believe in Christ. This is most certainly true. **(Luther.)**

All that I was, my sin, my guilt,
My death, was all my own;
All that I am, I owe to Thee,
My gracious God, alone.

The evil of my former state,
Was mine, and only mine;

The good in which I now rejoice
  Is Thine, and only Thine.

The darkness of my former state,
  The bondage, all was mine;
The light of life in which I walk,
  The liberty, is Thine.

Thy grace first made me feel my sin,
  It taught me to believe;
Then in believing, peace I found,
  And now I live, I live.

All that I am, even here on earth,
  All that I hope to be
When Jesus comes and glory dawns,
  I owe it, Lord, to Thee.

(Horatius Bonar, 1853.)

Now I have found the ground wherein
  Sure my soul's anchor may remain;
The wounds of Jesus, for my sin
  Before the world's foundation slain;
Whose mercy shall unshaken stay,
When heaven and earth are fled away.

Father, Thine everlasting grace
  Our scanty thought surpasses far:
Thy heart still melts with tenderness,
  Thine arms of love still open are,
Returning sinners to receive,
That mercy they may taste, and live.

O Love, thou bottomless abyss!
My sins are swallowed up in Thee;
Covered is my unrighteousness,
No spot of guilt remains on me;
While Jesus' Blood, through earth and skies,
Mercy, free, boundless mercy cries!

(John Andrew Rothe, 1728.)
(John Wesley, 1740.)

Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy Blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose Blood can cleanse each spot.
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Just as I am; Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because Thy promise I believe;
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Just as I am; Thy Love unknown
Has broken every barrier down:
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!

(Charlotte Elliott, 1836.)

The Day of the Feast.

This day must be different from other days. The aspiration of the grateful heart, anticipating the joys and blessings that are promised, must rise with a new note on this morning. The approach to the House of God may well be filled with meditation appropriate to the Feast that we expect. The Communion Service, from Introit to Offerings, is filled with the spirit of worship. The Pastor invokes the Peace of the Lord, the snowy veil is removed, revealing to our eyes the silver vessels containing the bread and wine which are to be offered to God, that Christ may make them instruments of His Peculiar Presence. We await the time when we are to kneel at His Table in silent, sacred prayer. As He gives to us the mystic gift, surely we will want words to welcome Him in the secret utterance of our hearts. And when, having received Him, we sit devoutly while those who are in the same fellowship with us and with the Father and the Son partake, it is fitting that we pray, giving

each his own thanksgiving, until we are ready, all, to give united thanks. An hour of prayer, a time of Sacrament and of Eucharist, of receiving gifts and of returning thanks, a sweet, fragrant hour with God, in the communion of saints. An hour for holy thoughts, for dear memories, for deep inspiration. A holy hour, a holy day, new beginning of a more holy life.

The Lord bless thee and keep thee.
The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. Amen.

PRAYERS.

Morning Prayers on the Day of Communion.

O Thou holy, blessed Trinity, true, eternal God, from my heart I render to Thee glory and honor, praise and thanksgiving, that Thou hast preserved me and mine, with all that Thou hast given me, from all harm and danger through the past night, by Thine unmerited goodness; that Thou hast turned away from me the guile and might of the evil enemy, and hast permitted me to live and to look upon this joy-giving morning light. God be praised that I am granted my wish, which my longing soul sends forth: Make

me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice. Now, Lord, it is come to pass that Thou hast graciously accepted my soul, hast redeemed it from destruction, for Thou hast cast all my sins of yesterday behind Thy back. My lips and my soul which Thou hast delivered, are joyful and sing Thy praise. I will sing of the grace of the Lord forever. My God, I rejoice in this blessed morning of which it is said that I, with other Christians, shall go into Thy House, in Thy great goodness. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. As the heart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. For the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. Great are the works of the Lord, which His angels have desired to look into; he who beholds them hath inner joy and pure delight. Therefore, Thou faithful God, as Thou hast begun a good work in me, a poor sinful man, do Thou further and perfect it graciously, through Thy power, to Thine honor and my soul's eternal salvation. Lord, I, truly, am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof, but let Thy grace, which can do all things, make me worthy and well prepared, so that the precious Food, and the blessed Drink of the Body and Blood of my Saviour in the heavenly Meal of Love, may refresh my soul. Clothe Thou me with the cloak of righteousness, wrap around me the wedding garment of true and living faith, that I may not be found among the hypo-

crites and unworthy guests, but as a worthy guest may be partaker, at Thy Table, of all Thy treasures of grace. Thy goodness, Lord, be over me as I hope in Thee. May Thine eye be over my life, my body and soul, my incoming and my outgoing. Lend Thy hand of grace, and preserve to me all that of which I have need, O Thou faithful God, for this life and for that which is to come. Grant true penitence, renew my heart, save my body and soul. O hear, Lord, this my request and let my prayer not fail. Amen, in Jesus' Name. Amen.

(Allgemeines Gebetbuch.)

Another Morning Prayer.

Truly, Lord Jesus, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof. I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come within the house of my heart. And whence is this to me, that the Lord should come to His servant, the Just One to the sinner, the Creator to his creature, the Holy One to the unholy, the Highest to the lowliest? I am but dust and ashes, yea, but a wretched moth and worm, yea, nothing and less than nothing before Thee. I ought, in truth, to come to Thee, and Thou comest to me! Oh, make clean the habitation of my heart, search out every corner of my soul, enlighten the darkened soul, heal the sick soul, warm the cold soul, and abide forever with the dearly bought soul! O Jesus my Food, O Jesus, my Refreshing, I am laden with sins, relieve me; I

am sorely wounded by the devil, heal me; let me be united with Thee through this holy Pledge, so that Thou abidest in me and I in Thee, Let Thy Holy Supper be a holy Medicine, by which my sins shall be healed; a holy Strengthening of heart, by which my weakness shall be taken away; a holy Power, by which all temptations shall be overcome, all pains of my soul shall be relieved, and instead, new grace enkindled, faith made strong, hope confirmed, love increased. Grant this to me, O faithful Saviour. Thy holy Body be my Food, Thy crimson Blood be my Drink, the Bread of Angels give me strength, the Water of Life refresh me, satisfy my thirst, preserve me unto eternal life. Amen. **(Joshua Stegman.)**

Before Receiving the Lord's Supper.

My Lord Jesus Christ, look upon my sinfulness, my misery and need; I am poor and needy, and yet so careless of Thy medicine which Thou hast provided for the forgiveness of my sins and for my salvation, that I do not even long for the riches of Thy grace. Therefore, O my Lord, light the flame of longing for Thy grace, and of faith in Thy promises, within me, that I may not grieve Thee, my most holy and most gracious God, by my perverted unbelief and indifference, but may worthily eat and drink of the Bread and Wine of Thy Body and Blood, and thus, through this wholesome food and drink may be strengthened and preserved unto eternal life. Amen. **(Dr. Martin Luther.)**

Lord, it is true that I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof, but I need Thee, and I am eager for Thy help and grace, that I may become holy. So I come in no other confidence than that I have heard the sweet message that Thou dost invite me to Thy Table, and dost assure me, unworthy as I am, that I shall receive forgiveness of all sins through Thy Body and Blood, as I eat and drink in this Sacrament. Dear Lord, Thy Word is true, I do not doubt, and at Thy Word I eat and drink with Thee. According to Thy will and Word so be it unto me. Amen.

(Dr. Martin Luther.)

Lord Jesus Christ, my faithful Shepherd, and Bishop of my soul, Thou Who hast said: "I am the Bread of Life; he that eateth of Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst," I come to Thee humbly beseeching that Thou wilt prepare me by true faith, and make me a worthy guest at this heavenly Feast. Make me, to-day, to lie down in green pastures; lead me beside the still waters of life. Restore my soul, and lead me in the paths of righteousness for Thy Name's sake. Make me worthy of Thy Table and fill for me the cup of Thy grace and love. Awake in me a spiritual hunger and a holy thirst, that I may pant for Thee as the hart panteth for the water-brooks. Above all, give me true, heart-felt penitence and sorrow for my sins, and clothe me with the wedding garment of faith, that I may take hold of Thy holy merit,

and grasp and keep that beautiful garment given to me, so that I may not be an unworthy guest. Give me a lowly, forgiving heart, that I may forgive my enemy from the depths of my soul. Root out from my heart all bitterness and hatred. Plant in my soul love and mercy, that I may love my neighbor, yea, all mankind, in Thee. Oh, my Heavenly Physician, I bring to Thee a dead soul, give it life; a sick soul, heal it; a heart that is empty of all real virtues, fill it with Thy grace, with Thy Spirit, with Thy love, with Thy meekness, with Thy humility, with Thy patience. Abide forever in me, and let me abide forever in Thee, even as Thou hast said: "He that eateth and drinketh my blood abideth in Me and I in him, and I will raise him up at the last day." Amen.

(Johann Arndt.)

At the Reception of the Holy Supper.

O Lord Jesus Christ, may Thy holy Body strengthen and keep me in true faith unto eternal life. Amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ, may Thy holy Blood strengthen and keep me in true faith unto eternal life. Amen.

Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.

Lord, enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight, shall no man living be justified. If, Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there

is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared.

Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof. Speak the word only and Thy servant (handmaid) shall be whole.

I am Thine, help me. I will not let Thee go until Thou bless me.

O Thou Holy Bread of Life, Who hast come down from heaven, and hast brought Life to the world, come also to me, in my heart, and cleanse me from all impurity of flesh and spirit; come to me in my soul, heal and hallow it, be my keeper and my Salvation in body and soul. Amen. **(Johann Habermann.)**

After the Reception of the Lord's Supper.

O Thou my God, though I am a poor sinner, yet I am no sinner. On my own account and apart from Christ, I am a sinner, but in my Lord Jesus Christ, and apart from myself I am no sinner. For He has atoned for all my sin with His own Blood, as I firmly believe, in token of which I have been baptized, have been absolved through God's Word, and declared free and clear from all my sins, and have been fed and given to drink in the sacrament of the true Body and Blood of my Lord Jesus Christ, as sure pledges of grace, and of the forgiveness of sins received by me, which my dear Lord Jesus Christ, through His Blood, obtained and merited for me. For this I thank Thee forever. Amen.

(Dr. Martin Luther.)

Merciful God, Who hast again let the light of Thy grace rise upon us, through Jesus Christ our Lord, enlighten, admonish and strengthen our hearts by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, in firm faith and fervent love, to do in all things what is well pleasing in Thy fatherly gracious good pleasure, to the honor and praise of Thy holy Gospel, to the comfort and benefit of all believers in Christ. To Thee be praise, thanks and glory forever. Amen.

(Dr. Martin Luther.)

O Living Bread from heaven,
How hast Thou fed Thy guest!
The gifts Thou now hast given
Have filled my heart with rest.
O wondrous Food of blessing!
O cup that heals our woes!
My heart, this gift possessing,
In thankful song o'erflows.

My Lord, Thou here hast led me
Within Thy holiest place,
And there Thyself hast fed me
With treasures of Thy grace;
And Thou hast freely given
What earth could never buy,
The Bread of Life from heaven,
That now I shall not die!

Thou givest all I wanted,
The Food can death destroy;
And Thou hast freely granted
The Cup of endless joy.

Ah, Lord, I do not merit
  The favor Thou hast shown,
And all my soul and spirit
  Bow down before Thy throne!

Lord, grant me that, thus strengthened
  With heavenly Food, while here
My course on earth is lengthened,
  I serve with holy fear:
And when Thou callest my spirit
  To leave this world below,
I enter, through Thy merit,
  Where joys unmingled flow.

(From Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1858.)
(John Rist, 1651.)